

VIII.—*The Knot reported as Breeding in Iceland.*

By OTTO OTTOSON, M.D.

On the 17th of June, 1898, a nest of the Knot (*Tringa canutus*) was found in the island of Hrisey in the north of Iceland. It contained four fresh eggs of characteristic appearance. As I know no other discovery of a nest of this bird with eggs, and their identity is beyond all doubt, though the bird was watched and not shot, I presume that the facts relating to it may be of great interest. Concerning the nest and its position, I can only say that the bird was breeding together with several pairs of *T. maritima*. So soon as I received the clutch I wrote for full details about it, with an account of the discovery; but, unfortunately, the collector (E. Möller, of Akureyri in Iceland) was then dead. However, some particulars accompanied the sending of the eggs.

The collector, who had a very good knowledge of the Icelandic bird-fauna—of which I, during a ten years' connexion with him, had many opportunities of satisfying myself,—knew this bird very well, and had often seen it in spring, but never before met with it breeding, though in the course of thirty years' collecting of eggs he always had his attention especially directed to it. Of the nest nothing is stated, and of the bird only that it was not shy but kept near the nest, and could therefore be observed with great accuracy. Möller would not shoot it, hoping to get another clutch of eggs from the same pair, and he regarded it as enough that he had seen it at the distance of a few mètres. The colour of the eggs is as follows:—

Ground greenish grey. The markings consist of close, very oblique spots, forming a zone or wreath at the thick end, partly of dark red-brown on the surface, partly of deep grey-violet and grey-blue underlying spots; there are besides at the thicker end a few dark black-brown spots and streaks very much on the surface. The eggs are quite like very large eggs of *T. alpina* of the closely-spotted

type, and cannot be confounded with any others of the same size.

Dimensions : 41×29 ; 41×29.1 ; 41.4×28.5 ; 41.4×29 mm.

Weights : 89 ; 92.5 ; 93 ; 97 centigrams.

Lenhofda, Sweden,
December 1st, 1904.

IX.—*An Ornithological Excursion to the Victoria Falls of the Zambesi.* By W. L. SCLATER, Director of the South-African Museum.

THE recent opening of the railway between Bulawayo and the Victoria Falls on the Upper Zambesi has rendered a visit to what is, without doubt, the most remarkable natural phenomenon in Africa, if not in the whole world, an easy matter, and one which can be undertaken in comparative comfort and at a fairly reasonable cost.

Having just completed the manuscript of the fourth and last volume of the 'Birds of South Africa,' I felt that I was entitled to take a short holiday, and decided to visit the Falls, and at the same time to make some additions to the collections of the South-African Museum from that district.

As is well known, the first European who saw the great Falls of the Zambesi was David Livingstone. On his fourth journey from the south in 1852 he first met the upper waters of the Zambesi at Sesheke, some sixty miles above them. Thence he went right through to the Atlantic coast of Angola at St. Paul de Loanda. Returning from Loanda in 1855 he left Sesheke on the 3rd of November to descend the Zambesi to its mouth. He stopped at the Island of Kalai, about thirty miles down the river, and from this point made an excursion still further down in a small canoc. He landed on an island at the lip of the fall itself, where he made a little garden and carved his initials on the trunk of a tree. On this island, now called "Livingstone Island," can still be seen the identical tree, and indistinct traces of the "L" which he carved on it in November, 1855*.

* See his 'Missionary Travels,' p. 525.